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ANSWER

TO

A LETTER

From a Gentleman in the
Country, to a Member of the
House of COMMONS :

On the VOTES of the 14th Instant.

Relating to the

Trade of Ireland.



DUBLIN:

Re-Printed by *Andrew Crook*, Printer to the King's Most
Excellent Majesty, on *Cork-Hill*: And are to be sold by
William Norman and *Eliphael Dobson*, Booksellers, 1698.

07-1619

An ANSWER to a Letter from a Gentleman in the Country, &c.

SIR,

WE live in an Age where Scribbling is the Language of one man to another ; and too often used on a Subject, to which they are as much strangers, as to each other's person. This seems our case, we come abroad with the Crowd to please our selves, tho' we disturb others; but that which brings me in Print, is, because I think Men of better Understanding will not trouble themselves to Answer your Unpolish'd Libel on the Government, and our Brethren in *Ireland*; and by that means your Invectives might have the success you wisht for, *viz.* A belief amongst the Industrious part of the Nation; which, were they true, the first work of *England* should be to remove our Friends, destroy the Natives, and send over a Hundred thousand Soldiers to keep the Island from *them*; that know how to make good use of it, if we do'nt : But the best way of Confuting your Maxims in Trade and Government, is to repeat them, and then a very few words will Answer them.

I begin with your assertion, *That it cannot but be the trouble of all Thinking Men, to see a Kingdom and People once so famous for Trade and Navigation, to Fight themselves out of both.*

To this it's Answer'd, I meet with few of your opinion, but such as think the Nation did ill to Fight at all.

Obedience to the late K. tho' in Wooden Shoes, and Faggots on our backs, to *Smithfield*, was our duty, your Holy Church tells us; but that which makes few believe it, is, that Doctrine was always Preach'd by Men of Debauch'd Lives, and Prostitutes for preferment. But Sir, I must tell you what Men that think as much as your's, say; and that is, They believe that by the War which is ended with so much honour and advantage to the Nation, we have secured our Trade and Navigation, with something more that perhaps you are no friend unto, *our Laws and Religion*; but as to Trade and Navigation, pray how should we have preserved them if the French had been Masters of the *United Provinces*. For seeing we and the Dutch were fully employ'd both together, to deal with the French alone, which way could we have blown the French and Dutch Fleets out of the Sea in case they had been united. Those that find fault with our War, would be pleased with our Captivity: Soft words are called for by such as are wounded with Truths, therefore I shall not speak my Thoughts of your Principles. You tell us of *700 years Harvest, and 50 Millions spent in this War*; if it were more, Englishmen think we have the worth of it: But I hope you do not believe the whole 50 Millions are carried out of the Kingdom; it is demonstrable, that the greatest part is still amongst us, tho' I confess it may be in worse hands than before the War. I must own my self no Friend to that practice, which enriches the Servant and beggers the Master. It should be the abhorrence of all good Men, to see people in Civil Employments ready to burst with unrighteous Gain, and the Industrious Merchant languishing by the Oppression of their Servants; but this we hope will be enquired into.

Your

Your next Paragraph begins thus; *Among the many Rivals of our Trade and Navigation, I have often thought Ireland to be the most Dangerous, and that which led me in to this Opinion, was the practice of the two last Reigns, Encouraging the Irish more than their English Subjects in Trade and Navigation, thereby to make Ireland a Nursery for Arbitrary Government, to which the English were Abettors.*

There needs no other Answer to your Thoughts, That Ireland is most dangerous to the Trade of England, but that all the yearly Exports of Ireland, amount not to the Value of one *East-India* Ship's Cargoe, as will appear by what follows.

That you say of the Design of the two last Reigns, to introduce Arbitrary Government is not doubted, but that the *English* in Ireland were Abettors to it, is most manifestly False; there were no Men in the three Kingdoms, that ventured their Lives more bravely against it, than they did; and to them I think in a great measure we owe our Quiet and our Trade, on the late happy Revolution of this Kingdom, which I fancy is the Reason you are so Angry with them; perhaps you cannot forgive the stand, they of *Enniskilling* and *Londonderry* made to the late King's Army, when they designed for *Scotland* if they could have Reduced those Men in their way: They would then have been troublesome to us nearer home, where *You* and *Your Friends* were ready to receive them.

As to the *English's* being for *Arbitrary Government*, you are as much out, as in the numbers of the *Irish* Seamen; and least you should think I speak at random, as you do, know, I was Born in a City that hath a great share in the Trade of *Ireland*; have been thrice in that Kingdom, and made all the Observation I could of the Nature, Trade, and Constitution of that Country;

Country ; amongst other Things, I found they had very little Navigation ; *Dublin* their Capital, had not one Ship belonging to it, *Carickfergus*, or *Belfast*, and *Cork*, had a few small Craft, but not a Ship of Force or Burthen in the Kingdom. I enquired particularly the Number of their *Irish* Seamen, and by all I asked, was answered, they never saw one that could *Top* and *Part*, a Phrase they have among Seamen.

Your next Paragraph tells us, *How dangerous it is to England, to leave Ireland to their own Conduct in Trade and Government.*

Surely you are a stranger to the Laws of both Kingdoms, or else you would have known that they can Pass no Act of Parliament in *Ireland*, but what comes first from the King and Council here ; and cannot alter one Word in it, but must take the Act just as it comes from *England*.

Your following Observations of the Scituation, Nature, Product, &c. are true ; for that Reason I think we should keep it in *English* Hands, and not follow your Proposals to drive them out : But of that when I come to your Expedients.

Now as to your *Five particulars*, wherein you say, *Ireland Interfers with the Trade of England* ; First, *in that of their Fishing*, wherein no doubt they have Advantage above us, but they never had yet Men, Money, or Craft to make use of it ; the more's the pity, it being a loss to us, and I think a Fault that we do not help them.

Your second Assertion is true in part, *Their Provisions are Cheaper* ; but then let me tell you, they are not so good as ours, and their Butter and Cheese is near as dear.

Your third and fourth Observations, are so apparently False, that one Word will Answer them both ;
you

you say *You have been twice in Ireland* ; but besides your self, I may venture to say, there was never any man in it but can tell you, there is not Timber to supply the tenth part of the Use of the Kingdom ; I have seen a Survey of all the Woods in that Island, and except *Shellela*, there is not so much valuable Timber in the whole, as one Gentleman hath in *England*. Surely then we are in no danger of their *Building Ships*, or *Tanning Leather*.

Your Fifth Observation is of their *Wool*, in which you are right ; but as for the *multitude of Irish Spinners*, you are in an Error : They are so far from being our *Rivals in the Woollen Manufactory*, that this last year they could not get so much in all the Country as to cloath their small Army.

But however, I think we have reason to look carefully into that Manufactory, which is the *Soul* of all we have left of Trade ; and yet I see Advocates for the *East-India Trade*, to the destruction of our own Manufactory at home.

In this, methinks we act like ill Husbands ; that being Abused abroad, Revenge themselves at home on their Wives and Children. We are wheeld'd out of our Manufacturies by Designing Men, amongst our selves ; kick'd out of our *Fishing* abroad ; and then like *Sampson*, we pull down the House upon our selves, to be reveng'd for our two Eyes. So I take our *Woollen Manufactory*, and *Fishing* to be. But let us destroy *Ireland*, beat our Wives and Children, and we shall Recover all.

You end your Fifth Paragraph with that which you think the most unaccountable of all, *The suffering them to hold Parliaments*.

Now Sir, if you never read History, and so are ignorant how the Crown of *England* came first to be Entitled to *Ireland*, then it is great Assurance in you to talk of the Constitution of a Kingdom you know nothing of.

If

If you have Read, you must know there was a Compact that they should hold Parliaments, with the same Priviledges as *England*: And altho' they have by their own Parliaments abridged themselves by *Poynings Law*, in some things, yet have they still an Act of Parliament for *Annual Parliaments*, and another *Act*, that all Laws made in *England* before the Tenth of *Henry VII.* should be in force in *Ireland*. I believe you will own we had Parliaments in *England* before *Henry VII.* they have then the same Right to hold Parliaments that we have, but they are a poor People, and must submit. Have a care of that French Maxim (we know not whose turn it may be next) I remember in the Reign of *Charles II.* discoursing with the Duke of *Ormonde* (who I think, take him every way, was one of the Greatest Men of that time) upon the Tryal of the Earl of *Shaftsbury*, his Grace said, *My Lord Shaftsbury was never my Friend, yet were I a Commoner, and one of his Jury, I would starve before I would find him Guilty by straining the Law : We must have a care of Constitutions and Laws ; they are of better use to preserve our selves, than to take off our Enemies.* If you were of this Opinion, you would not be against *Ireland's* holding Parliaments. Have a care, Sir, of breaking into Constitutions, we know not who may come next ; we are sure His present Majesty will preserve our Constitution, and it is our happiness, He is more tender of them then many of our selves ; but if we will destroy them in a good Reign, there may come a time when our own Presidents may be brought against us.

You end your Paragraph with an Invektive saying, *You hope the House will make them Remember they were Conquered.* I remember to have seen a Book in this Reign, by Order of Parliament, Burn'd by the Common-Hangman, for Asserting that Conquering Doctrine. It is by our Laws, that all the Monarchs of *England*, and amongst

mongst the rest, His present *Majesty* is declared to be King of *Ireland, de Jure*, when King of *England, de Facto*. Now if you please to remember, the *Brittish* of *Ireland, who are Proprietors of most of that Kingdom*, were as one man in the Interest of *England*; fought (as is said before) for, and with the King, that came to deliver them from the *Usurpation and Tyranny of the late King James*; for so it was, He having lost his Title by *Abdication*, before he came to *Ireland*; And King *William* came there to rescue his Protestant Subjects in *Ireland*, from the *Ravage and Murders of the Rebellious Irish Subjects*. This I hope you will not make a Conquest, if it be, we have had two or three of them in this Reign, by the Execution of Traytors at *Tyburn*.

You now come to your Expedients, which are like that of an English Sea Captain, that being in danger of Two *Dunkirk Men of War*, a French Officer on Board him, Asked the Captain *what he should do, for he dreaded being carryed into France*; Never fear, said the Captain, *I wont be taken*: How can you be sure of that, said the Frenchman? *I will first blow up my Ship*, reply'd the Captain; at which *Monsieur* thrugg'd his Shoulders, and said, *Par ma foy un tres bon expedient Anglois*. So are your Expedients; as will appear presently. I will repeat them in Order, and then One Answer will serve them all.

1. *That they should not Build or keep at Sea, one Ship.*
2. *That they be Bounded and Prescribed in all their Trade by Act of Parliament here; not only to the place they shall go, but also to the Qualities and Natures of the Commodities they Export, and to the Time when they shall Export, that we may have the first Market.*

3. *That they shou'd not Fish, but with Men and Boats of England.*
4. *That their Money be brought to the Standard of England.*
5. *That they hold no Parliament, but be Governed by the Parliament of England.*
6. *That they be not permitted to make any Manufacturies but Linnen.*

I told you before, one Answer should serve for them all, and that shall be with a Question, such as a Porter made a Lord Mayor of London, in the Usurper's time (for Regulating the price of Beer, was Proclaiming) *That none shou'd be sold for more then a Penny a Quart : A Porter standing by my Lord Mayor's Horse, call'd out, that there was the most material thing left out, which was, appointing who shou'd drink that small Beer, for he swore he'd drink none :* So, Sir, you should have appointed in your Expedients, who should live in Ireland ; for no English man will ; And surely our Nation will not think it safe in any others Hands.

Methinks you make a bold stroke, to propose *Ireland* should be Governed by the Parliament of *England* ; that (in English) is *Lopping off* one of the Three Kingdoms from the Crown. Your Scheme of Government exceeds all I ever Read of ; you would make *Ireland* to be a *Common-wealth*, but none of the Country to be in the Government ; sure some body need Govern you, tho' it were in *Bedlam*.

You and your Letter, with referring to Mr. Cary of *Bristol's Book* ; I know the Gentleman, and have Discoursed on his Book, which tho' it comes not to your Notions, yet he abated much of it in Explanation.
And

And now, Sir, with your leave, I shall make some General Remarks on your whole Letter : What you say of the *extraordinary Advantages* Ireland hath above us in Trade and Navigation, is true, and it is as true, that they never had opportunity to make use of them.

The *Brittish* in general speaking, acquiring their Fortunes there by Arms, not with *Arts* or *Trade*; those few that come there with either of the two last, are usually such as have mis-carried in their own Country; so for want of stock, do rarely more than earn their Bread in that plentiful Country. Frequent Rebellions lessens the Inhabitants, but adds Acres to the *Brittish*; which they are more fond of, than Navigation and Commerce: And so far you are in the right, that they are most taken up in Country Employments, but you are much in the wrong in saying, the *Irish* are most in the Trade and Navigation; they seldom Sail further then to a Potatoe Garden, and Trade only in Cows. I have been in several parts of the World, and according to my Observation, the *Irish* are as Ignorant of Trade and Navigation, as the *Indians* in *America*. Now that you should fear their Numbers at Sea, that have not Five Seamen of their Nation, gives ground to believe, you writ with Jesuitical Maxims; Throw dirt — however false, some may stick. Put into the Heads of the multitude, frightful Stories of the danger we are in, of being over-run by the *Irish*, both at Land and Sea; and that you may have two strings to your Bow, you bring in *Foreigners* Running away with what the *Irish* do not of the Trade of Ireland. To shew your Integrity in this, I will give undeniable Authority, out of the Custom-house Books of Ireland against you.

I have now by me an exact Account of all the Exports and Imports of Ireland, for Six Years of the greatest time of Ireland's prosperity, and by this Account,

count, their Exports in the Year 1682, amounted but to Five Hundred Forty One Thousand Four Hundred and Nineteen pounds *Sterling*, of which Four Hundred and Two Thousand pounds was for Accompt of Merchants in *England*; and Exported in their Ships, One Hundred Thousand pounds *Sterling*, for Accompt of the *English* in *Ireland*, and about Forty Thousand for Accompt of Foreigners. And that you may not think this Computation was made at Random, I will tell you how it was done.

The whole Account was drawn out of the Custom-house Books by a Clerk under the Examiner of their Accounts, with every Merchants Name that entered them, and to what Place the Ship belonged, in which the Goods were Exported: this was after all brought into Form by a Man of the greatest Practise and Experience that perchance was ever a Trader in that Kingdom, who knew for whom the most considerable Factors dealt. (For by the way, most of the Trade of that Kingdom, is managed by Factors) This Gentleman did assure me with demonstrations more then can be comprehended in the compass of this Discourse, that there was very little Exceptions to be made to this Account, which he spent some years in perfecting, for he writ Observations on every Commodity Exported and Imported. What is here brought against your *matter of Fact*, as you call it, is I think undeniable.

And that your ignorance in Commerce may appear, I will shew that what you say of *Foreigners running away with the Trade of Ireland*, is impossible; and that for these Reasons.

- I. First, because the greatest part of their Product is by their own Laws prohibited to all parts of the World but *England*, as their *Wool*, *Sheep-skins*, *Woollen Tarn*, *Linnen-Tarn*: Green and Tan'd Hides pay

pay double Duty upon their Export to any part but *England*; all which Commodities are more then half their Export.

2. The *Act of Navigation* is in Force by Law in *Ireland*. Now Sir, if you know not my meaning by mentioning that Act, it is, That by that Statute *no Foreign Ship can carry any Goods from Ireland to England*.
3. The greatest part of the Provisions of *Ireland*, are Exported by Ships of *England* to our Foreign Plantations, for little Beef, or Pork, whatever we think, goes to Foreign Markets; now the Act of Navigation before mentioned, Prohibits all Foreign Ships from Trading to our Plantations.
4. By Law they are Prohibited the Importation of any, tho' Commodities of our Foreign Plantations but from *England*; not so much as a Pound of Tobacco or Sugar is admitted into *Ireland*, but what comes from *England*; I may add, that they Forfeit Ship and Goods, if they carry out of *Ireland* any thing but Provisions, Servants and Horses. I knew a Ship seiz'd in *Virginia* for bringing but a Dozen of *Woollen Stockins* from *Ireland*. After all this, pray what is there left for Foreigners to drive that mighty Trade you speak of in *Ireland*.

I think it proper to enquire now where the Million is, you tell us *Ireland runs away with, of the Trade of England*; it is proved, that their whole Annual Exports amounts to little more then one half of your Million, and of that Four Hundred Thousand goes for *England*, and

and English Merchants Accounts; you have then but Forty Thousand Pounds to raise your Million out of.

There is another remarkable Instance you give of *the danger we are in by raising their Money 20 per Cent.* above its value; it would be no very mannerly question to ask you where you have been for this 12 Months, in which time the nature of Coyn hath been so fully Debated and Resolved in Parliament, and explained to the whole Nation, that I thought every one in it was convinced, that by raising Money we cheated no body but our selves; and I do not think but that the Gentlemen of *Ireland* understand that Truth, but necessity often prevails over Judgment; we know not their Circumstances, only may guess, that a Country who in their greatest Prosperity had never Four Hundred Thousand Pounds Sterling of Running Cash, and Two Hundred and Forty Thousand Pounds *per Annum* of the Rents of that Kingdom, belonging unto, and spent in this, are in hazard of having all carryed out. But let their consideration be what it will, I think we have no reason to fear, but rather pity them in this matter.

I had like to have past over your most sensible part; for it in Truth shews the Man and his Conversation.

Your Words are these, *But that which I think the most unacceptable of all is, that we suffer them to hold Parliaments, Settle Estates, Pardon their own Rebels, &c,*

It is plain what you mean, but it comes so near Arraigning the Government, that you durst not express it in plain Words; the late King *JAMES*, with his Irish *Mob*, that he called, a Parliament in *Dublin*, did there Attaint all the Brittish Protestants by Name, that owned King *William* their Rightful, Lawful King; and to make sure of all the Protestants Estates in that Kingdom

Kingdom, their pretended Act named Women and Children that never saw Irish Ground. Now this Rebellious Edict of the Irish, the present Parliament of Ireland have declared and Enacted Illegal and Rebellious, and the pretended Parliament that made it, to be then in Rebellion against the Crown of England. And for this you say, the Parliaments of Ireland pardon their own Rebellions: for you do insinuate there being in Rebellion when they left the late King James: Truly Sir, by what I hear of that Parliament, they are so far from pardoning Rebellions, that they expel'd one of their own Members for but a small overt Act in the time of the late King James being in Ireland. They are a people (I am sorry it should be so in respect of our selves, tho' I commend it in them,) that are not divided, as we are, in Parties, but as one Man in His Majesty's Interest, except a very few that are advanced in the King's Service, as too many have been here, by mistake of some; and design of others; however those Plants grow not in Ireland; it is observed no venomous Creature brought from England, lives there; I suppose you never intend to try.

I have now done with your Letter, and shall end mine with directing what follows, to Men of better Principles than you seem to be; and such I presume will not use Ireland as the Harlot would have had the Child, her Language was like yours, *divide the Child, let it be neither mine nor thine*. Your Friends have neither Right nor Possession of it, and they that have you Malign; But all true English men consider them as *Bone of our Bone*, and it is reasonable to believe the House of Commons passed that Vote for making the Trade of Ireland more Beneficial to England, with that consideration, there is no doubt room enough to make it so.

I have often thought it would be one of the first
Works

Works the Parliament would go upon, at the conclusion of a Peace, and not to let such a Treasure as that Island, might be made to *England*, lie waste, as it hath always been; ever since the *English* have had footing in it, which is unaccountable; it would be thought so in the conduct of a Private Man, if he should neglect his own Inheritance, and lay out his Money in Improving that of another Man's; is it not so when we employ our Men and Money to enrich the Subjects of the *Mogul*, and neglect a Country of our own so near as that, if rightly managed, would strengthen and enrich our Nation more then all the Trade we have in the World besides. What would *France* make of it, if they had it? I do not think they would cry it down, as the destruction of their Kingdom: We have perhaps, more reason to value it then is at present seen; I doubt we are in more danger of losing our Trade and Navigation, then ever we were in since we were a People; and it is feared, we have nothing left to help us but *Ireland*; but then it must not be left to former Conduct, I am loath to say what I know in this matter.

We should also consider, the Reason we have to encourage *Brittish* Planters in that Kingdom; for no other can secure it to *England*. But I have been too long for a Letter, tho' too short for the Subject; I shall only give my humble Opinion, That it would be for the service of *England* in this great Concern of settling the TRADE of both Kingdoms, to hear the People of *Ireland* before they conclude them; hear him, hear him, is *Parliament* Language, and *Christian* Practice, before Judgement. I end with the Words of *Seneca*, in his *Morals*

He that lives according to Reason, shall never be Poor; And he that governs his Life, by Opinion, shall never be Rich.

FINIS.

